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ZERUBBABEL's TRIUMPH

IN THE

GRACE OF GOD;

OR,

The Great Mountain before him leveled,
and the Second Temple by him finished.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

P O R T S M O U T H.

By SAMUEL MEADOWS. K

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ERRATA

IN THE

GRACE

The Great Mountain House

SERMON



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Z E C H A R I A H, iv. 7.

Who art thou, O Great Mountain?

Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.

AN inspired writer informs us, "That
" righteousness exalteth a nation,
" but sin is a reproach to any people."
" ple." This was verified in the children of

Israel, who, when they walked righteously before God, were exalted, but when they rebelled against him, were reproached, and fell a victim to their implacable enemies.

The principal adversary of this people was the Assyrian, who often invaded their coast, spoiled their properties, and captivated their persons, till at length the ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive. This fatal and final blow was given by Shalmaneser king of

A 2 Assy-

~~Affyria; which was the ninth year of Ho-~~
 shea king of Israel; which was the sixth year
 of Hezekiah king of Judah, 2 *Kings* xviii. 9,
 10. This awful Providence was a loud call
 to backsliding Judah; but they hearkened
 not, neither to the voice of the prophets who
 warned them, but waxed worse and worse,
 till the Lord stirred up Nebuchadnezzar king
 of Babylon, to carry them also into captivity;
 which was in the eleventh year of Zede-
 kiah king of Judah, *Jer.* xxxix. 2. This
 gloomy scene caused the prophet thus to
 complain: "Israel is a scattered sheep: the
 "lions have driven him away: first the king of
 "Affyria hath devoured him, and last this
 "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath
 "broken his bones," *Jer.* l. 17. This cap-
 tivity lasted seventy years, according to the
 word of the Lord, *Jer.* xxv. 11, 12. at which
 period the Lord raised them up a deliverer,
 namely, Cyrus king of Persia; who, after he
 had subdued Babylon, with his uncle Da-
 rius, "in the first year of his reign (that the
 "word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jere-
 "miah, might be fulfilled) the Lord stirred
 "up the spirit of that great prince, that
 "he made a proclamation throughout all
 "his kingdom, and put it also in writing,
 "saying,

“ saying, thus saith Cyrus king of Persia,
 “ The Lord God of heaven hath given me
 “ all the kingdoms of the earth, and hath
 “ charged me to build him an house at Je-
 “ rusalem which is in Judah; who is there
 “ among you of all his people? His God be
 “ with him, and let him go up to Jerusa-
 “ lem, which is in Judah, and build the
 “ house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the
 “ God) which is in Jerufalem, &c.” *Ezra* i.

1, 2, 3. Upon this royal proclamation, we
 find, verse 5, “ Then rose up the chief of
 “ the fathers of Judah, and Benjamin, and
 “ the priests, and the Levites, with all them
 “ whose spirit God had raised to go up, to
 “ build the house of the Lord which is
 “ in Jerusalem.” Who when they came up,
 laid the foundation thereof according to the
 decree of Cyrus, and the word of the Lord
 by Isaiah the prophet, *Isaiah* xlv. 27, 28.
 But after this we find the work went on
 slowly, and at length the building ceased,
 till the second year of the reign of Darius
 king of Persia; (*Ezra* iv. 24.) occasioned by
 the adversaries of Judah mentioned in that
 chapter. This raised such a mountain of dif-
 ficulties in their minds, knowing their own
 weakness, that they could not get over: but
 the

the Lord, in order to encourage them, gave them to understand it was "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord," as in the context: then addresseth the mountainous adversary, as in the words of our text, "Who art thou, O Great Mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it."

In discoursing on these words, I shall endeavour to do the following things:

I. Shew who we are to understand by Zerubbabel, and wherein he was a type of Christ.

II. The Great Mountain which the Lord declared should become a plain.

III. What is meant by the head-stone: which should be brought forth with shoutings, in ascriptions of Grace.

I. Who we are to understand by Zerubbabel, and wherein he was a type of Christ.

1. Who

1. Who we are to understand by Zerubbabel. By him is meant the son of Shealtiel, *Haggai* i. 1. He is said to be born in Babylon; wherefore his father called him Zerubbabel, which the learned interpret, *a Stranger at Babylon*; and certain it is, he was not of the Babylonish race, but of the line of David, of the race of the kings of Judah, a prince of the blood royal, as appears from the genealogy in the first of Matthew. He was governor of Judah, *Hag.* ii. 2. he had the honour of bringing up from Babylon to Jerusalem the first return of the late captives, *Exra* ii. 2. and also the great honour of building the house of the Lord, the second temple, the foundation of which was laid at the time this chapter was written, of which our text is a part, as appears from verse 9. “The hands of Zerubbabel have
“laid the foundation of this house, his hands
“shall finish it.”

2. Shew wherein Zerubabel was a type of Christ. But by the way observe how the antitype exceeds the type: 1. As Zerubbabel was an offspring of David, so was Christ; yea, he was also the root of David and of Zerubbabel. “I am, says Christ, the root and
5 “the

“ the offspring of David,” *Rev.* xxii. 16. Christ, as God, is David’s root, as he is of all men by creation ; and the root of grace to all the elect, who were chosen in him before time, derive grace from him in time, which shall terminate in glory to all eternity. But Christ as man is David’s offspring ; therefore, 2. As Zerubbabel was a prince of the blood-royal, so was Christ, and that in a far more extensive latitude than any earthly prince : he is emphatically called, the Prince of the kings of the earth, *Rev.* i. 5. the King of kings and Lord of lords, *Rev.* xix. 16. yea, he is the blood-royal of heaven, the Lord God omnipotent that reigneth, *Rev.* xix. 6. So that his kingly power is not contracted to this low earth, but he doth what seemeth him good in the armies of heaven above, marshals the planetary worlds, bringeth out their host by numbers, he calleth them all by names.

Lift up your eyes, behold the things on high ;
 Who form’d the argent fields, the rolling sky ;
 Who bringeth out their host, that shining
 train,
 And guides the stars along th’ ethereal
 plain ;

Musters

Musters their forces, calls them all by name;
 Brightens their lustre with his glowing
 flame;
 He by whose power they still remain the
 same.

3. As Zerubbabel brought up the first of the captives from the literal Babylon, so Christ brings up spiritual Israel from mystical Babylon; but he must first subdue them by his grace, and make them a willing people in the day of his power; he attracts them with his love, brings them sometimes to the Church, which is his spiritual Jerusalem on earth, and at length to the heavenly Jerusalem above. 4. As Zerubbabel was appointed to build the material temple, or house of God, so Christ was appointed to build the spiritual temple, or house of God (I mean his own church) as appears from *Zec. vi. 12, 13.* "Behold the man whose name is
 " the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out
 " of his place, and he shall build the tem-
 " ple of the Lord; even he shall build the
 " temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the
 " glory, &c." A glorious building this when finished, as will appear, 1. In the foundation,
 2. The superstructure.

B

1. The

1. The foundation of the spiritual house, or church of God, is the glorious Lord Jesus Christ, as appears from *Isaiab. xxviii. 16.* "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." That Christ is there intended by the foundation, is clear from *Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 6.* The metaphor made use of is a stone, which holds forth the stability and immutability of Christ, the everlasting rock of ages, which I shall attempt to illustrate: 1. In shewing by whom this foundation was laid. 2. Its impregnable nature. 1. This foundation was laid by Jehovah the Father in his eternal purposes and designs; he then made choice of this precious stone, *1 Pet. ii. 4.* and his elect in him, *Eph. i. 4.* according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Herein appear the ancient, the eternal love of God the Father, in making such early and ample provision for us in his dear Son Jesus Christ; a foundation immutable as the throne on which he sits. 2. It was actually laid by Jehovah the Son, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; by which I would be under-

understood, the person, offices, grace, blood, righteousness, sacrifice or death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, &c. of Christ, are the foundation the Church is built upon, and on which every poor sensible sinner may venture his eternal, his immortal all; who gave himself for us, saith the sacred writer, not for fallen angels, but for us, even us poor, fallen, wretched, rebel men. Amazing grace! free and discriminating, shining like the radiant beams of the sun, to discover the ineffable love of our transcendently great, incomprehensibly glorious, for ever exalted, and never enough adored Redeemer.

3. It is also laid spiritually, by Jehovah the Spirit, in the heart of a poor sinner at conversion, who seeing his deplorable state and condition, his heart being overwhelmed within him, is led to this rock that is higher than himself; a rock, which the gates of hell, and all the artillery of the infernal pit, shall never be able to prevail against. 4. It is laid prophetically by the prophets, those holy men of old, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, (consequently could not err in judgment); these hold forth Christ in all his divine perfections and properties, as you may see interspersed in the prophetic writings. 5. It was

laid apostolically by the apostles of our dear Lord; so that we are said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, *Eph. ii. 20.* This foundation the apostles and prophets not only laid, as before, but also built on; let us imitate them, and so grow unto an holy temple in the Lord. 6. It is laid doctrinally by the faithful ministers of the Gospel, who declare, with the apostle Paul, that no other foundation can any man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. iii. 11.* Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, *Acts iv. 12.* This is, according to the law and the testimony, agreeable to the analogy of faith, even that faith which was once delivered to the saints.

I come, 2dly, to consider the nature of this foundation stone. In brief it is solid, substantial, impregnable. An inspired writer, with much propriety, informs us, it is a tried stone. This solemn truth is obvious, in that he was tried, 1. By his Divine Father, who tried his faithfulness and strength: 1. His faithfulness, in committing all his elect

into his hands, where they are secured as in a strong garrison, and who hath discovered his faithfulness in assuming their nature, standing in their law place, answering the demands of injured justice, and will continue faithful in bringing them all safe to glory, saying, Father here am I, and the children which thou hast given me: then shall he deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to his Father, the building being finished, the head-stone being brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it. 2. His strength, by laying on him the ponderous load of our sins. The evangelical prophet declares, "that he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." *Isa. liii. 5: 6.* And one of the apostles of the Lamb corroborates this amazing truth, who informs us, that he bore our Sins in his own body on the tree, *1 Pet. ii. 24.* This wretched load must have sunk him beneath the grave, had it not been for supernatural strength: But he was God as well as man. Let us now reflect on
Calvary's

Calvary's horrid eminence, and behold with astonishment the prince of peace covered with blood, groaning, bleeding and dying a corporal death, with the burden of our sins on his soul; and think how applicable the words of the lamenting prophet were to him in that dreadful season, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." *Lam. i. 12.* If that was the day of God's fierce anger, how much more this, when his glittering sword of inflexible justice was bathed in the blood of his well-beloved son. Never did the Almighty discover such hatred against sin, as in this amazing transaction; no, not in casting rebel angels from the realms of dazzling light to the dark abyss of endless misery; the casting rebellious man from his princely state in Eden's fruitful garden, to get his bread by the sweat of his brow, in the howling wilderness of this world; the bringing of a flood upon the old world, and sweeping it with the besom of destruction: these are but faint discoveries of divine resentment, when compared with the sufferings of Christ! O how should
this

this make us hate that detestable monster, Sin ! O how should this make us admire the love of God to sinners, in giving his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 2. He was tried by Satan the prince of this world, who tried his sonship; and the rectitude of his nature, in the wilderness: His sonship, in such trying language as this: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread; if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," (meaning from the pinnacle of the temple), &c. at which time he also tried the rectitude of his nature, hoping to find some corrupt passion that he might work upon, by the alluring bait of worldly honour, and thereby draw him into black idolatry: but neither of these temptations would take with our blessed Lord; for as he was the eternal Son of God, holiness was essential to his divine nature; and his human nature was that holy thing that was born of the virgin Mary, pursuant to the declaration by the angel Gabriel, *Luke i. 35*. So that the infernal adversary was obliged to desist, after many hellish efforts, and, the evangelist informs us, departed from him for a season,

a season, *Luke iv. 13.* And it is pretty evident it was but for a season, since our blessed Lord, after this conflict, told his disciples, saying, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me," *John xiv. 30.* And soon after we find our dear Lord in the garden, in such great agony that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, *Luke xxii. 44.* Again, we have reason to believe that he tried him when on the cross; for it would be unreasonable to suppose that the prince of darkness should be idle when his subjects were so closely engaged, but rather that he would exert all his power in this his last engagement, in bruising Emmanuel's heel, thinking thereby to put a final period to his existence: But behold! infinite Wisdom hereby taketh the wise in his own craft, bruise the serpent's head, spoiling principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it, *Col. ii. 15.* 3. The Lord our foundation stone was tried by wicked and unreasonable men, who tried his patience in despising his person, aspersing his character, blaspheming his miracles, contemning his doctrines; and, after all, nothing less than his blood would satisfy those worse than savage

vage monsters unparallel'd cruelty ; and even in executing that black and bloody tragedy he must be loaded with invectives, wounded with the tongue of detraction, and become the object of their wicked scoff and mockery : so that had our Lord sprung from the cross, and dashed them instantaneously into Hell, it would have been but what they justly merited : but he was all meekness and patience, who, “ when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he was buffeted, threatened not, but was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,” *Isa.* liii. 7. — 4. He hath been tried by his faithful followers in all ages, who have tried his love, and found it to be stronger than death ; they have ventured their immortal all upon him, and were never disappointed, neither shall any ever be, for “ he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” *Heb.* vii. 25. He is also as willing as able, as himself hath declared, *John* vi. 37. “ Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out ;” no, under no consideration whatsoever ; for “ he is a rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment, a God
C “ of

“ of truth, and without iniquity, just and right
 “ is he,” *Deut.* xxxii. 4. which is great encouragement for poor sensible sinners to quit all their sandy foundation, and come and venture upon this invincible rock.

2. I shall make some brief observations on the superstructure. By the superstructure I mean the body of God’s elect. Observe, 1. That as Christ the foundation is a chosen stone, so are all the stones in this building; they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, *Eph.* i. 4. and as the foundation is a living stone, so all the stones of this building are, or shall be, living stones also, as appears from 1 *Pet.* ii. 4, 5. to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.
 2. As the first temple fell in its natural head, Adam, and so dead in trespasses and sin, in this wretched state it remains till grace quickens some of these dead stones, and raiseth them from the ruins of the fall, in order to build the second temple; and this is done by the divine agency of the Spirit of God, as the efficient cause in regeneration, when a divine principle, or living spring of action, is infused
 into

into the soul; at which time they are taken out of the quarry of nature, the rock being broken asunder; for the law entering into the heart of a poor sinner, makes dreadful havock and trembling in some, as in the case of Saul, who, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" *Acts* ix. 6. Likewise the goaler, who "sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, crying, What must I do to be saved, &c." *Acts* xvi. 29, 30. Others again are more gently broken, or rather melted, as in the case of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, *Acts* xvi. 14. As also the Bereans, who received the word with all readiness of mind, *Acts* xvii. 11. with Zaccheus the publican, &c. This work is often done by the ministry of the word instrumentally, see *Jer.* xxiii. 29. "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" And sometimes with other instruments, as appears from the above cited instances. This is the good work begun, and is attended with conviction, or a changing them from what they were, to what they were not, which is done ordinarily by the Lord's hewing them by

his Prophets or Ministers, as in *Hosea* vi. 5. and is carried on by persevering grace. 3. These stones indeed are some of them very rough and hard, and take a great deal of hewing; they look at first fitter to pave the den of the roaring lion than to build the temple of the lamb; but is there any thing too hard for the Lord to do? No, he that hath appointed hath power to execute his decrees, and will bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Which brings me to my second general head:

II. I am to shew what we are to understand by the great mountain which should become a plain, by explaining, 1. The mountain; 2. The plain.

1. The mountain: by which we are not to understand a mountain in a literal, but in a mystical sense; so that by the great mountain is meant the great mountain of opposition Zerubabel met with in building the temple; which mountain was cast up by the Samaritans, as you may read at large in the 4th chap. of *Ezra*: for after the foundation of the temple was laid, pursuant to the decree of Cyrus, *Ezra* vi. 3. he being called to the war with the Lydians and

and Scythians, his son Cambyfes was left as viceroy, and he being no friend to the Jews, through the counsel of their enemies, the work went on slowly till the death of Cyrus, as appears from *Exra* iv. 5. At whose death his son Cambyfes succeeding him, the enemies took the advantage, and by artful letters against the people of the Jews, ingratiated themselves into his affections, by which means the building ceased until the reign of Darius King of Persia; for we find that in the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, who is supposed to be the same with Cambyfes, (Ahasuerus being rather a title of dignity than the name of a person) the accusation was wrote against them, *Exra* iv. 6. Mention is also made of Artaxerxes in verse 7, who is thought by some to be the same person with Cambyfes, he being so called in heathen authors; others think Smerdis the impostor is meant, who was the pretended brother and successor of Cambyfes for about seven months. But be that as it may, the opposition was such, and the difficulty so great, as seemed unsurmountable. But hear what the Lord saith for his people's encouragement, in the words of our text, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Which

Which plain I shall in the second place briefly consider.

This plain was made when the mountain of opposition was leveled in the second year of Darius King of Persia, who, upon searching the records, and finding the decree of Cyrus, gave command for the building to be set forward, as you may read *Ezra* vi. 1, 2, 3. Who can but see the hand of God herein!

This mountain of opposition is a lively emblem of the oppositions, difficulties, and troubles, which the Church hath met with at different periods of time, as also of individual believers; as will appear by what follows:

1. The Church: And here I intend not to enumerate the trials she met with under the Old Testament dispensation, though these were neither few nor small, as appears from that sacred history, and is also confirmed by the brief martyrology in the eleventh of the Hebrews; but what I shall more particularly observe, are the conflicts she met with under the Gospel-dispensation. No sooner was Christ the foundation actually laid in his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, which are the

the ground of the Christian's hope, but persecutions more vehemently arose from different quarters, as appears, 1. From the death of Stephen the proto-martyr, *Acts* vii. at the close, and the havock which was made in the Churches, chapter the viiiith, which was carried on by the Jews for many years with very little intermission. But at last it became a plain; for, about forty years after the death of our dear Lord, those murderers and persecutors were overthrown by Vespasian the Roman Emperor, whose son Titus, general of the army, besieged the city of Jerusalem, and took it, burnt their city and temple, and, according to Josephus, what by the sword, famine, pestilence, &c. there fell of them eleven hundred thousand, besides what were taken prisoners; which was a just judgment for their rejecting and murdering the Messiah, and then persecuting the members of his mystical body. But the Christian's troubles ceased not here; for we find a formidable mountain cast up by the Pagan Empire; I mean the ten persecutions, which lasted to the beginning of the fourth century, during the Smyrnian Church-state; then this also became a plain, and that by the hand of Constantine the Great, whom the Lord was pleased to raise up to vindicate his

his people's righteous cause against their implacable enemies. But alas! this is not the Christian's rest, because it is polluted; for we find soon after dreadful heresies broke out among themselves, which raised fresh troubles again. But, to come nearer home, let us reflect upon that great mountain cast up by Queen Mary, fortified with engines of cruelty threatening death and destruction against the Church of Christ: but death soon levelled this horrid mountain, so that it became a plain: then had the Church rest for a season, and the Lord hath been pleased, of his great mercy, to bless us for many years in this nation with peace in the Church. O that we may set forward with all our might in building the house of the Lord, by improving every opportunity to that great and important end!

2. I would also observe, that there are mountains of difficulties before individual believers. No sooner is the foundation of grace laid in the heart, but troubles arise from different quarters; sometimes from the men of this world using their strongest efforts to turn their heart from the Lord; and sometimes, according to the prediction of our Lord, "The

" the son against the father; the mother against
 " gainst the daughter, and the daughter against
 " the mother; the mother-in-law against her
 daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law
 against her mother-in-law," *Luke xii. 53.* so
 that a man's enemies are those of his own
 house. This we may learn something of by
 strict observation, which others by sad ex-
 perience know to be melancholy truths.
 How many pious wives have sons of Belial to
 their husbands, who know not the Lord, and
 become their most inveterate enemies? and
 how many religious husbands, like David,
 have Michals to their wives, who scoff at all
 religious worship? And godly children have
 such ungodly parents, who instead of training
 them up in the nurture and admonition of the
 Lord, are endeavouring, if possible, to break
 the bruised reed, and quench the smoking
 flax; and that by rough language, cruel threat-
 enings, and obscene actions: And how often
 do we find Christian parents grievously distres-
 sed with rebellious and persecuting Absaloms,
 such children as cause their gracious parents
 to complain with the oak in the fable, " the
 " branches that sprung out of my own body
 " became wedges to split my heart asunder."
 Again, sometimes our troubles will arise from

D

our-

ourselves, when we reflect upon our past evil conduct, the manifold transgressions we have been guilty of, especially our repeated backslidings; these, as they are very aggravating in the sight of God, so they are very distressing to the returning soul, and seem almost unsurmountable; and when the Christian takes a survey of his own heart, and sees the numerous internal corruptions which are ready to spring into open action, together with his backwardness to duty, lukewarmness, and wanderings in duty, and wearisomeness of duty, he is ready to cry out with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" *Rom. vii. 24.*

Once more: Another quarter from which troubles arise, is that of Satan, the grand adversary of souls, who useth many arts to prevent our progress in the divine life, sometimes by darting blasphemous thoughts into the mind, and then persuading us they are ours; whereas, I believe we are no more guilty, than should a thief cast stolen goods into my door or window, which though it might be my grief, yet not my sin. At other times, his fiery darts of temptation will be engaged against

gainst us in order to tempt us to call in question the truth of the Scriptures, and, it may be, the truth of Christ's deity or existence; and here he strikes at the foundation, which if taken away, what can the righteous do? Yea, sometimes, it may be, to call in question the very being of a God: and if these temptations fail, he will then endeavour to persuade us that all our past experience is a delusion, and we are no more than painted hypocrites, after all our splendid profession.

These are some of the mountains individual believers may expect to meet with; but they shall become a plain; for the work is not man's, but God's: so that if the adversary persecute without, he who hath the hearts of all men in his hand can, and sometimes doth, turn them as the rivers of water whithersoever he pleaseth. If our inward lusts rebel, they shall not reign; "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," *Rom. vi. 14.* And if the old serpent rage and fight against us, he shall not prevail to the destroying of the building, because Omnipotence is engaged on our behalf, and he shall bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Which naturally leads me to the last thing proposed, which is

III. To shew what we are to understand by the head-stone which should be brought forth with shoutings, by observing, 1. The head-stone: 2. The shoutings.

1. The head-stone: By which, I understand, is meant the finishing or top-stone of that material building the second temple, which was finished in the sixth year of the reign of Darius King of Persia, *Ezra vi. 15.* according to the will and word of God, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure, notwithstanding the many impediments that may lie in the way.

2. The shoutings: Which were, Grace, grace unto it. It is observed by Ezra the scribe, that when the foundation of this house was laid, there were shoutings, see *Ezra iii. 10, 11.* ascribing it to the mercy or grace of God. And though this shouting and ascription of grace is not expressly mentioned, when the head-stone was brought forth, yet I think it is clearly intimated, where it is said, that the children of Israel, the Priests, and the
 2 Levites,

Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, *Ezra* vi. 17. And as it was with the material, so it shall be with the spiritual temple: He, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. And here observe,

I. What we may understand by the head-stone of the spiritual building's being brought forth. By which I mean the last elect soul which shall be converted and prepared for glory; at which final period Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, *1 Cor.* xv. 24. Now as this great and important work is assigned to Christ as Mediator, who is the Lord our righteousness and strength, What power is able to withstand him? Not all the combined powers of earth and hell. So likewise shall it be with individual believers; the foundation of grace being laid in the heart, the top-stone shall surely be laid: this one thing the Apostle was confident of, and was not ashamed boldly to declare, "that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," *Phil.* i. 6. Here, note, grace is a work, and
not

not what is innate or natural to the sons of men; and it is a good work, 1. In its nature; it being divine, for ye are hereby made partakers of the divine nature, 2 *Pet.* i. 4.—— 2. In its consequences; it makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, *Col.* i. 12.—— 3. In its end; which will issue in glory, when faith shall be turned into vision, and hope into fruition; it is a good work begun, but not yet finished; but shall be, when the head-stone of grace is laid in the soul: and it is begun in you, contrary to the sentiments of some, who deny inherent righteousness; and he that hath begun it is God, who will perfect that which concerns you according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus; which to me is one incontestable proof of the final perseverance of the saints. But perhaps some may be ready to say, I believe, where the good work is begun, it shall be carried on; but I am afraid it is not begun in me: How then shall I draw a safe conclusion on this important point? or how shall I know whether I am a believer in Christ? To which I answer, To them that believe, he is precious, 1 *Pet.* ii. 7. but to them that believe not, there is no form, comeliness, nor beauty, that he should be desired,
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neither in his person, offices, nor grace: but to the believer his person is precious, his offices are precious, and his grace is precious: and the spiritual desires of the soul are drawn forth after him, and the subject is grieved when he cannot love Jesus more, and serve him better; yea, his people are precious, his word, his ways, and his ordinances. Now where this is the happy experience, we may safely conclude that the good work is begun, that the foundation of grace is laid in the heart; consequently, in the second place, the head-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

The foundation of grace in the heart, like that of the material temple, was brought forth with shoutings, as declared by the lip of truth: "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God," *Luke* xv. 7, 10. And may we not reasonably suppose there will be shouts of joy and triumph, when the head-stone of grace shall be brought forth and finished in consummate glory? We are also informed, that when Christ the foundation-stone was first laid on this earth, tidings of great joy were brought by an angelic messenger, who suddenly was
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joined with a multitude of the heavenly host, ascribing praise and glory to God in the highest strains and loftiest shouts of praise, *Luke* ii. 10, 13, 14. Thus shall it be when the head-stone of this magnificent building, the last elect soul, shall be brought forth; it shall be with shoutings, but with much more solemnity and grandeur, “for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first,” *1 Thess.* iv. 16.—Behold the grand procession! see his august Majesty! The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, not in the form of a servant, but in the form of a prince and judge: he shall then come in his own glory, and the glory of his Father and the holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; a shout far greater and more extensive than either the shout when the foundation or head-stone of the material temple was laid; the latter indeed is said to be heard afar off; but this shall be heard from pole to pole, * will strike the centre, and cause the pillars of heaven to tremble; rend the rocks, burst the graves, awake the dead, and cause

* Hervey.

millions of the prisoners of death to spring forth from their gloomy mansions; for the dead in Christ shall rise first, which will be a numerous train; "then we which are alive" and remain shall be caught up together with "them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord," verse 17. Then the eternal ascription of praise will be, Grace, grace unto it! The grace of the Father in electing, the grace of the Son in redeeming, the grace of the Spirit in sanctifying; for free grace drew the plan, free grace laid the foundation, free grace rears the superstructure, bringing forth the headstone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Thus I have passed through what I proposed, and shewed, *first*, who we are to understand by Zerubbabel, and wherein he was a type of Christ, in several particulars; especially in building the second temple; and considered both the foundation and superstructure, in which Christ is engaged, in that the foundation is Christ himself; and observed by whom he was laid, and by whom he was tried: In the *second* place, considered the great

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mountain which should become a plain, and wherein it was an emblem of the great oppositions which the Church in general, and individual believers, sometimes meet with: And, *thirdly*, what we are to understand by the head-stone, which should be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it, as an emblem of the final perseverance of the saints. I shall now make some improvement, and conclude. And,

1. Since Christ is a suitable foundation, let us enquire whether he be suitable to our taste; and if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to him come, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, that ye also, as lively stones, may be built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

2. Whatever mountains of opposition you may meet with, whether from the world, the flesh, or the devil, they shall become a plain; for more are they that are with us, than they that are with them; for we have all the perfections of deity engaged in our behalf; in-

finite wisdom drew the plan, and infinite power will perform the work. (If God be for us, who can be against us?) So that,

3. He shall bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it; not Works, works: no, but Grace, grace: so that all boasting is totally and eternally excluded in this matter; “for by grace are ye
 “ saved, through faith, and that not of your-
 “ selves: it is the gift of God: not of works,
 “ lest any man should boast,” *Eph. ii. 8, 9.* What then will become of the vain boasters, who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the open prophane finners, who know not God, when the Lord himself, even Jesus Christ, “shall be revealed from heaven,
 “ with his mighty angels, in flaming fire,
 “ taking vengeance on them that know not
 “ God, and that obey not the gospel of our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ?” *2 Theff. i. 7, 8.* Will they join in the solemn shout? No, but weep and howl for the misery come upon them, especially when the Judge shall ascend the throne, and the irrevocable sentence passed; a sentence, from which there is no appeal, but will stand immortalized, as in eternal pillars
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of brass. Who then can plead their cause? Was it possible that Noah, Daniel, and Job, these three men, with Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel, these four angels, to make intercession for them, while they themselves shed tears of blood, numerous as the drops of winter rain, the Judge, with a resolution steady as the throne on which he sets, would answer with a frown, What I have written, I have written. O that you and I may stand in that great and solemn day at the royal Judge's right-hand, and hear that kind invitation sweetly pronounced on us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then shall we ascribe Grace, grace to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



T H E E N D.

